



February 12, 2019

Dear Elected Representatives of the State of Wisconsin.

As you begin a new term, we write to call your attention to our state's most profound and pressing issues — the livelihood and well being of Wisconsin's 2.3 million poor and struggling residents.

Although we are the majority of those who you represent, our issues are rarely

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Last Spring, we organized nearly 6,000 people nationwide to participate in nonviolent civil disobedience. For six weeks in May and June 2018, more than 30,000 poor and disenfranchised people, clergy and moral leaders joined this Campaign. We flooded over 35 statehouses from coast-to-coast and the U.S. Capitol, demanding a massive overhaul of this nation's moral compass. We addressed this nation's voting rights laws and offered new programs to lift up the 140 million Americans living in poverty, experiencing ecological devastation, living under the negative impact of militarism and the war economy, and the humanitarian devastation at our southern border. This was the most expansive wave of nonviolent direct action in contemporary U.S. history.

In Wisconsin, our members rallied for five weeks from May to June, 2018 at our Madison State Capitol building, each time leaving a list of demands with then Governor Walker. During the Monday marches, rallies, and protests, 55 out of about 2,500 advocates took things a step further by demonstrating their commitment to the principles of the Poor People's Campaign. They applied the principles of nonviolent civil

disobedience. These exercises resulted in the issuance of municipal citations and fines by the Madison Police Department.

Hundreds of poor and disenfranchised people testified throughout the nation and made their demands known. On October 17, 2018, the Wisconsin Poor People's Hearing was held in Racine, Wisconsin. The event was well attended by elected officials, candidates for elected office, clergy, community leaders and poor people from around Wisconsin. The five testifiers told their personal stories of living in poverty while earning only the minimum wage, discrimination, and the struggles of immigrants and ex-offenders.

We have come together because Wisconsin is in a moral crisis. In our state, about forty percent of Wisconsinites—about 2.3 million of our fellow citizens—are poor or low-income, including 680,000 children, 1.2 million women, 704,000 people of color and 1.5 million White people. 109,000 of our veterans have less than \$35,000 in income. All this in a state where working at the minimum wage takes a nearly 90-hour work week to afford a two-bedroom apartment. 1.2 million workers—44% of Wisconsin's workforce—earn less than \$15 per hour. About 664,000 of our neighbors depend on SNAP benefits for food. Yet while all this is happening, Wisconsin has spent about \$4 billion in public subsidies, and the federal government has spent about \$1 billion in subsidies.

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Fight poverty, not the poor!

Wisconsin Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival

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